

THE RAINBOW CHASER

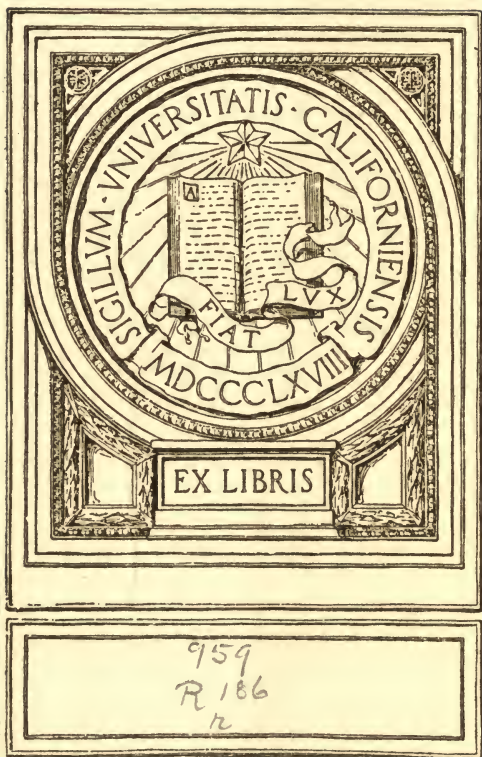
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KENNETH RAND



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The Rainbow Chaser and Other Poems

BY

KENNETH RAND

Author of "The Dirge of
the Sea-Children," etc.



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K. A. O.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Of the following poems, "The Rainbow Chaser" first appeared in *The Smart Set*; "The Dream Minstrel" in *Lippincott's*; "The Half-Poet," "The Lonely Road," "The Sun-Worshipper," "Out on the Paths of Wonder," "A Pagan's Creed" and "The Liar" in *The Yale Literary Magazine*; "The Blind Gypsy" in *The Bellman*. Thanks are due the editors of these publications for permission to reprint.

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PRELUDE

THE HALF-POET

BECAUSE a Palm is laid across my lips

When most the phrases clamor to be sung,
I may not ape the ready love that slips

Like beggar's patter from a smoother tongue;
I blame, who envy: yet, beneath the Hand,
The silence speaks to those that understand.

Gold of the sun, and wonder of the days!

Murrain on life, to lend but half a voice!
How may I bear the rapture and amaze

Of loving, while the very clods rejoice?
Yet may I speak my part, when planets see
The dim Hand leave my dumb lips spirit-free.

THE RAINBOW CHASER

I'VE followed my restless heart
To the uttermost ends of earth —
New stars arise in alien skies,
Yet what is my roving worth?
Have I wasted my wealth of years
In a profitless wayside mart,
And garnered a crop of rue and tears
From heritage-seeds of dearth?
Aye, the way is over-long,
And the road is ever new —
It may be right or it may be wrong
And my love be false or true —
So long as the rainbow hold,
And its glittering arch extend,
I'm off for the pot of fairy gold
On a road without an end!

*On a road without an end —
Though Fate be harsh or kind —
Ah, Love may sleep and eyes may weep,
But we've left the world behind!*

I've followed my fleeting love
From the east to the luring west,
And north and south through flood and drouth
I've carried my soul's unrest.
Have I bartered my house and home,
And my hopes of Heaven above,

For a castle built of fairy foam
And a maiden's merry jest?
Aye, my palace of a dream
May be over far away —
Ye know, who follow the rainbow-gleam,
How dear is the price ye pay!
Ye know, and yet ever bold,
Wherever the trail may trend,
Ye're off for the pot of fairy gold
On a road without an end!

*On a road without an end —
With never a goal to find —
Ah, Love may die and so may I,
But we've left the world behind!*

A PAGAN'S CREED

A FLOW of golden shadows, love and laughter,
And gleam of summer tears;
Bright spectres born of sunlight — and then
after
Come the dead years.

For what is life without the loss and winning —
The lure of lidded glance,
The ecstasy of joyous-hearted sinning,
The shadow-dance

By moonlight down an ilex-hidden hollow
Of mountain solitudes,
Where the dear ghosts of dead Bacchantes fol-
low
Through haunted woods?

Life is a pagan, dancing in the glamour
Of ruddy sunset-light,
Who scorns the sequel to the revel's clamor —
Tears in the night.

So, though the years bring dearth of easy par-
don,
And wealth of barren ground,
Still let the torchlight waver down the garden,
The cymbals sound —

Till, through the panting, bare-limbed festal
 madness,
 With the red morning-glow
Comes at the last the clear-eyed, cynic sadness
 The wise Gods know.

THE LIAR

I WROUGHT me a lyric of fire and fear,
And called on the world to heed —
Till strong men blenched at my haggard face
And shuddered, but would not read.

So I stole me the gold of the mines of Joy
And fashioned a conscious lie —
And they gave me the wreath of the kings of
Song
And prayed that I might not die!

(For the lie that I wrought was as old as the
world
And dear as the vision of Heaven —
Of the crimson lure of a maiden's lips
And the myth of a sin forgiven!)

But my heart was sick, and my soul grew less,
With the light of my failing days,
Because I had lied to my Knowledge-God
For the pottage of human praise.

O I clung to the rim of the cliffs of Hell
And called on an empty Name —
Till there dropped the tears of a weeping Truth
And saved my soul from the flame.

So I hid my soul in a maiden's hair,
And climbed to a clearer view —
And I found I had lied to a lying God,
And the myth I had sung — was true!

THE SUN-WORSHIPPER

O PASSING gods of passing creeds
That droop and die with mortal men!
Their ages-long procession leads
Through darkness to the Sun again —
Poor sorry ghosts that wheel and flee
Like shadows on a wind-swept sea.

For since we bear the yoke of Faith
And cringe to feel the goad of Doubt,
Our tortured Reason weaves a Wraith
Of Godhead we would die without —
A painted dream of carven plinths
And ghosts in man-wrought labyrinths.

Toys of a thought! The fortune-wheel
Of myriad vague existences!
Yet hear we not Thy challenge peal
Across the blue-lit distances?
The bannered shout at morn that stirred
Our oldest fathers with Thy word.

For art Thou not the Primal God —
The Sun that watched the youth of Man —
That touched the earth his children trod,
And bade it live, ere gods began?
The fertile ploughland laughs that sees
The births and deaths of deities!

Thy fingers bless the swelling bud,
Thy feet are gold across the hill —
I find Thy shrine in deepest wood,
Thy magic in each leaping rill;
And death itself Thy pantomime —
A scene-shift on the stage of Time.

So bow ye then to nameless lords
Ye may not feel, or see, or hear —
And bind the Soul in precept-cords
For sacrifice to curtained Fear!
Brother, thy creed is strong to save?
I cry thee comfort in thy grave!

THE LONELY ROAD

I THINK thou waitest, Love, beyond the Gate —
Eager, with wind-stirred ripples in thy hair;
I have not found thee, and the hour is late,
And harsh the weight I bear.

Far have I sought, and flung my wealth of years
Like a young traveler, gay at careless inns —
See how the wine-stain whitens 'neath the tears
My burden wins!

And wilt thou know me, Love, with bended back,
Or wilt thou scorn me, in so drear a guise?
I have a wealth of sorrows in my pack,
One lonely prize —

Thy dream — and dross of sin. . . . O, dim the
fields —

I may not find thee in so dark a land —
Yet I await what hope the turning yields
And beg with empty hand.

THE BLIND GYPSY

My world is girt with a rampart of wonder and
shadow,
Sunless I wander, forlorn, on the barrens of
Time and Space —
With only the scent of the sun on the heather,
the song o'er the meadow,
The dust of the highway warm on my feet,
and the wind in my face.

The roads that I knew are the paths of an in-
finite terror,
Treacherous, threading morasses of peril,
abysses of night;
And only the feel of the wind and the heat, in
my mazes of error,
To whisper of dawn or of noon, and the dear
lost rapture of light.

Yet, with the sun and the breeze and the dust
on the highway,
Only, O Lord, to feel! — and I cling to Thy
garment's fold —
And the snapping of fires that I may not see,
by the hedge in the byway,
Is the crackle of flame-new stars, and the
clangor of gates of gold.

“OUT ON THE PATHS OF WONDER ”

Out on the paths of wonder,
Where the mountains sit with their feet in the
white sea-foam,
And the wayward lightnings roam
In their curtained caves of fire,
Till the wings of the Hags of Night are riven
asunder
And the sea is pale as the rags of a tattered
shroud —
Under the star-split dome of driven cloud
I walk with my dead desire.

In the deeps of the blue-lit spaces,
Where the Master of Shadow is lord, and the
Silence nods,
The glow of thine eyes, O love, is a flame of
rapture,
And the sound of thy whisper the music of
heavenly places,
And the net of thy tresses a silken snare to
capture
The hearts of the careless gods.

Thy feet are light on the ramparts of earth
and heaven,
Thy limbs are wet with the spray of the Seas
of Years,

Thy cheeks are gay with the flush of the Rose
 love-given,
And salt with the wine of tears.
Thy lips are warm and sweet with thy long
 bereaving,
And thy breast is soft with the pain of thy
 love and grieving.

Over the lift and the send
Of the sea, till we win to the innermost heart of
 the maze
Of the web of the Years and the Days!
Till the riddle of Time
Shall ravel and fade and dissolve to the utter-
 most end,
And the heights that we climb,
The wind-pitted mountains of Air,
Shall flame with the crown and the splendor and
 triumph eternal

Of death, till I cover my face with the mesh of
 thy hair,
At the glory supernal!
For the Word of the Lord of the Gloom shall
 be drowned in singing,
And the shores of the Ocean of Terror re-
 sound with voices,
And the vaults and the arches of bottomless
 Shadow be ringing
With the song of an infinite gladness,

Till the lowliest depth of the shambles of Sin
rejoices

In the grip of thy great love-madness.
And the mightiest Gods of the Shadow shall flee
at the light of thine eyes,
Belovèd, who saith:
If ye wander with Love in the gardens of Para-
dise,
Shall ye flinch at the fingers of Death?

Out on the paths of wonder,
Where the Master of Shadow is throned on the
 sea, and the Silence nods,
I walk with my dead desire in the caves of the
 sleeping thunder,
And mock at the grim-eyed gods.

THE SEER

I MAY not tread the kindly ways
Where trudge the feet of men,
Nor know the pride of honest praise
Or flush of shame again;
My hearth-fire is the fairy blaze
That flits above the fen.

In that the gift is mine to see
A hand's-breadth i' the gloom,
And glimpse through curtained mystery
The dim To-morrow loom,
I walk the woods of fantasie
Where fairy flowers bloom.

O I have wept when all were gay,
And Youth and Love were wed,
For I have seen the death-sark sway
Above the bridegroom's head —
The dead-hole gape across the way
His eager feet must tread.

Then what the gift (as mortals tell)
To walk the racing tide,
Or with the ghosts at Olaf's Well
On Lammas-floods to ride,
When I have heard the shadow-knell
And living men have died?

THE DREAM MINSTREL

Across the world from Fairyland the winds
have blown a song to me —

(Harper, wake your magic in the old grey
hall)

And the sunlight on the flagging is a patch of
tattered blazonry,

Shred o' fading glory on the dull drab wall.

Turn again — turn again — see the weave un-
ravelling —

(Harper, set you back again the grey Fates'
loom)

Till the fields are gay with April and the heart
has ceased a-sorrowing —

(Lovers in the orchard, with the apple-trees
in bloom!)

Across the world from Fairyland the little
winds have flung to me

Petals of the wild rose, riotous and red,

And the scent of summer woodland where the
sun-embroidered tracery

Gilds the moldy carpet of the old year's
dead;

Scent of happy valleys, and the treasure of the
marigold,—

(Happy, sunny valleys in the Provinces of
Dream)

Hark the whisper, lilting, “ *Love, my heart is
ever thine to hold —*

Ever and forever, till the last star’s gleam! ”

“ *Ever and forever —*” but the wind is o’er the
hills to me,

(The blue hills o’ Faerie, O harper in the
hall)

Luring on to follow down the shadow-lane of
memory,

Memory as faded as the sunlight on the wall.
Turn again — weave again — set the loom
ahead again —

Summer-gold is darkening to hot, blood red;
“ *Ever and forever — forever —*” Ah, the love
o’ men!

(Harper, still your magic, ere my heart
droop dead!)

REACTION

LAST night methinks our madness won to
Truth —

There in the starlit temple of the sky —
Stripped for the nonce our cynic robes of
Youth,

Let slip our creeds, and left but *You* and *Me*
Stark on the land's-end of philosophy.

To-day we meet with faces wrung and wry —
Poor harlequins in masks of sanity!

THE BALLAD OF THE RED FOOL

THE Jester laughed at the castle gate
 (*The stone was grey, and the iron cold*)
And sang of a monarch good and great
 Who flung a Jester a purse of gold.
 (*Mighty the king, and wise, and bold!*)

The Baron sat at his window high
 (*O his hair was white, but the month was May*)
And marked a hawk in the empty sky,
 And a budding tree, and a lamb at play.
 (*Ragged the Fool, but the song was gay.*)

The Jester shifted his scarlet cloak
 (*The robe was torn, but the cloth was red*)
And rattled his battered staff of oak
 On the barred portcullis above his head;
 And “Ho!” cried he. “Are ye drunk or
 dead?”

“For the gate is wide, and the yeomen sleep —”
 (*O the lord was free with his beef and beer*)
“And only the rooks are guarding the keep,
 With all Romance at the portal here;
 Is the knight so great, that he scorns his
 gear?”

The yeomen snored in the sunlit court,
And the Baron dreamed at his window high,
As the Jester crept through a sally-port
And cast about with a searching eye.
(Drowsy the wind from the sapphire sky!)

He filled him full with the Baron's wine
(The grapes are plump on the Spanish hills)
And crowned the yeomen with columbine
And wreathed a vine in the window-grills.
(The wine-cup spattered in purple rills.)

He found him pens and a horn of ink
And parchment fallow for tithe and tax,
And wrote him a song to the goblet's clink,
While the lizards crept from the pavement
cracks —
(The sun was bright on an idle axe.)

He wrote him a song of a stalwart knight
(O a knight is sad for the want of a maid)
Who followed the lure of a gay love-light
Over the wide world, unafraid.
(O merry the carol of shield and blade!)

He weighted the scroll with an empty cup,
And left it plain on the Penman's board —
Where the flagons at hand held never a sup.
*(Heavy the book that the Penman pored,
And heady the wine that Barons afford!)*

The Jester reeled in a tipsy dance
And hummed a tune of a knight and lass;
Quoth he, "For' the wine I have paid Romance,
And a stave to carol at Michaelmas!"
(*O the Spanish wine in the crystal glass!*)

So he laughed away through the portal's gloom
(*The sun was gold and the sky was blue*)
While the Baron dreamed in his tower room
Of a joust, and a lady fair and true.
(*The love was old, but the dream was new.*)

Then the Penman yawned and blinked and
stirred
(*O flagons of wine and a hunch of bread!*)
And his thought was slow as a wounded bird,
And he dreamed he had written the song that
he read,
By the grace of God and a muddled head!

They gave him a wreath and a purse of gold
(*O songs of jousts and a lady fair!*)
And a velvet mantle to turn the cold,
And he sat at meat in a carven chair,
With the laurel twined in his scanty hair.

The Jester slept in the ditch below
(*O wine of Spain, with its fire and pride!*)
And what ever came of him none may know —
But the Penman sat at the Baron's side.
(*Sing hey, Romance and the world so wide!*)

JACK O' VISIONS

JACK o' Visions, dreaming in the firelight,
What's the picture in the embers' glow?
*'Tis but the flame of wasted summers, fading,
To die in winter snow.*

And what care you for summer and its wasting,
Grey-headed Jack, who hugs the dulling fire?
*'Tis but that Youth is such a sorry spendthrift,
And dreams are his desire.*

And may they not be worthy of the spending,
O cynic Jack, the dreams he never won?
*They are not worth one magic day in April
A-lilt with wind and sun.*

Ah, Jack, but see them, how they flutter gleam-
ing —
Like tropic birds that sailors trade for gold!
*I' faith, they be as fleet and hard to capture,
And droop in autumn cold.*

Then say what Youth may buy with all his
riches,
His Ophir-horde of newly-minted years!
*Why, let him purchase Love and War and
Laughter,
And wine of honest tears.*

What say you? 'Tis a dole we hold in common —

The draught of Life we do not need to buy.
*Alas, yet there be many who go thirsting,
Nor prize it till they die.*

FAUNUS AT THE CROSS

As I followed the feet of the sun on the wind-
swept hills,

When the light-flung gold of the spring was
gay on the grass,

I caught through the careless laughter of loos-
ened rills

From the church in the valley the drone of
the priests at Mass.

And I looked at the dun grey House, and the
heavens above,

While I stood with the wind in my face and
the sun on my head,

And learned of the passion of Christ (but I
dreamed of Love)

And the bright-lipped wounds (were they red
as the rose was red?)

Then my heart leaped up like a stag at the
shadow of fear,

For I glimpsed in a vision the loom of the
Altar of Pain —

And the flare of its terror was torture to blast
and sear,

Yet fair was the snow-white brow with its
crimson stain!

So I plucked me a red, red wreath where the
sunbeams slept —

“ Let Beauty to Beauty be brought as a gar-
land,” I cried,

And I covered the Thorns with a chaplet of
roses, and wept

For the grace of the blood-stained limbs that
had drooped and died —

When sudden the folds of the Vision were sun-
dered, and there

At the shrine of the Pale-Browed God in my
terror I stood,

And the satin-skinned petals fell slow through
the spice-drugged air,

And redder they lay on the stones than the
painted blood.

O I shrank from the grim-mouthed priests and
their harrying spell,

Till the curses ran out from the Cross and
pursued as I fled ;

But I bent to the rose-wreathed Christ in a last
farewell,

And the pure lips flashed to a smile and were
soft and red —

While a whisper as light as the whorls of the
censers' smoke

Wrapped me in wonder and crept to the
doors of my ears —

*“ Fear not! Be it grace of the Rose, or the
strength of the Oak,
Through both is my heart, when ye bow be-
fore Beauty with tears! ”*

A HARBOR SONG

THERE'S a schooner in the offing, with the sun-
set in her sails —
She's black as death across the west where slow
the splendour fails;
There's an evil wind from out the east that
backs against the day,
But she's shaking out her headsails for the
saunter down the bay.

There's a trail of ruddy cloth-of-gold that runs
to meet the Sun —
The path is plain before her, but her road is
never done;
She may not stay for prize or pay, for love or
law or hire,
When she harks to old Ulysses in his Islands of
Desire!

O the hills that fade behind her know the touch
of fairy feet,
The pipes of Pan are lilting clear from field to
village street;
And Spring is in the orchard-row, though sad-
dened hearts may break —
But she's dropping down the harbor with her
shadow on her wake.

So it's hide away your hope, my love, and lay
away your fears;
Your dreams are all behind you, with the rap-
ture and the tears;
'Tis a sorry trick of tops'ls — to catch the sun-
set so —
When dying *Love-will-keep-him* turns to *Love-*
has-bade-him-go!

O, it's roll her down to westward, for the prom-
ise of the Sun!
Can lure of woman hold the hearts the mother
sea has won?
They may not stay for prize or pay, for love
or law or hire,
When they hark to old Ulysses in his Islands of
Desire!

A WAYSIDE PARABLE

A WIND ran over the western hill
And the dust of the road was gay,
But the little smoke of the wayside fire
Was lost in the twilight-grey.
Said the Dust, "There is hope for the morn,"
Said the Fire, "Ere the morn, I die,"
And its ghost rose up to the vaulted roof
Of the temple-hall of the sky.

The wind slipped over the purpling crest
With a mantle of trailing cloud,
And spread the Dust on the sleeping earth
In a great grey tattered shroud.
And the hill was lost in a veil
Of the dark wet hair of the rain,
Till the spark of a Fire hailed the quickening
east
And the dim smoke curled again.

The wind strode in with the lifting sun
And the smoke of the fire was gay —
But the Dust was dead in the silver pools
That laughed with the laughing day.
Sang the wind, "Did ye fear, ere ye drooped
and died —

Did ye doubt what the Prophets said? "
And the new Fire snapped on its chrysalis-ash,
"Not I! But when was *I* dead? "

THE SORROW-EATER

WHY dost thou play 'tis thy dead love's heart
That beats in the gloom beside thee?
Surely thou learnest the minstrel's art,
So close in thy dream to hide thee!

Why dost thou play 'tis thy dead love's hair
That nets with its silk thy shoulder?
(Tricks of a harlot not overly fair —
Ah, brother, thy heart grows colder!)

Why dost thou play 'tis thy dead love's kiss
So fresh on thy lips and burning?
— *Peace! I have tasted the flame-hot bliss
That comes with a grief's returning.*

VESPER SONG ON THE OPEN ROAD

As a ribbon of raw red copper the road runs
into the west,
Looping the flanks of the mountain-ranks like
a chain on a maiden's breast —
The road that swerves and dips and curves till
it drops to the far sea-rim,
Where the trampling feet of the breakers beat
in a marching battle-hymn.

*For it's O my love,
Let the stars above
That burn on the bier of Day,
Blazon our path through the Chaos-
wrath,
Ten million worlds away!*

The rim of the Shield of the Master sinks, but
His helmet-plumes are high —
Flaunting in crimson and taunting the shadows
that creep to the zenith-sky;
The road is a ribbon of Romany red in the hair
of the gypsy earth,
And the trembling seas on a loom of breeze are
veiling her heart's unworth.

*For it's O my love,
When the stars above
Are witching our feet astray,
Fear ye to wend to the Cosmos-End,
Ten million worlds away?*

The silver spear of the hornèd moon is spurring
the steeds of Night,
And it's haste, ah, haste, ere the sun-gold waste
and wane in her altar-light!
For though love-shod through the paths untrod
of the valley of Death we run,
Yet hand-in-hand we may breathless stand, and
weep that the road be done!
 For it's O my love,
 Let the stars above
 That burn on the bier of Day,
 Lead us to meet at the Master's feet,
 Ten million worlds away!

ATHEISM

I DREAMED one night that I was lost among
The sounding mazes of an endless vault,
Deep-wrought from living stone, where spirits
halt
Their fearful flitting, and where grinning hung
Dry, monstrous skeletons, and corpses clung
To crosses for some unforgotten fault —
While dumb lips prayed that hidden Gods .
exalt
Accursèd souls long since from Heaven
flung. . . .

But lo, deep in the shambles' midmost cell
There shone a lamp, and by it, stern and
stark,
Amidst a sea of books, a figure sat
That scorned the light and faced the empty
dark —
That seemed a God itself — yet could not tell
What in the shadows it was staring at.

A FINANCIAL TRANSACTION

“I’M in horrible want,” quoth the shivering bard.

“Can’t I manage to raise a loan?
I’ve some property left, though to risk it is hard,

For ’tis all I can call my own.
But hey, for the red of the wine and the rose! —
I’ll give you an ample gain —
If I don’t pay up, you may straight foreclose
On my wonderful Castle in Spain!”

So the Usurer World gave him treasure o’ dreams

On the pledge of his mortgaged towers;
But he couldn’t pay up, for he squandered, it seems,

Every ducat on wine and flowers.
Yet the grim old Broker, with never a tear,
Charged an interest-rate of Pain —
Evicted the Poet, and then (as I hear)
Moved into the Castle in Spain!

THE OLD LOVERS

WE meet in a sorrowful land
That is hard by the gates of death —
A smile, and a touch of the hand,
As the sunset's flaming brand
Flickers and fails in the west
With the day-wind's dying breath —
'Tis the most we may dare, and best.

They say that the passion is cold —
That the flame is dead in the heart;
“Good friends, that have loved of old,
Once more, in the sunset-gold,
Meet with a clasp of the hand,
Nod and dream and depart —”
Ah, love, 'tis a sorrowful land!

I that have walked in a cloud,
You that have wept in the sun —
Wrinkled and wearied and bowed,
Cover the wound! Be proud!
Laugh — be it Hell the while —
That the world, ere the Hell be done,
May watch with a kindly smile.

A WESTERN OCEAN LYRIC

THERE'S a wind that treads the water
With tramp of sullen feet,
And grim and gray the westers play
With knives of driven sleet;
Our bows are shod with silver,
But purple-dark and cold
The shadows fly across the sky
To dim the sunset-gold.

O cursed be all the breezes
That hedge the west in cloud,
And twice and thrice, the crusted ice
That clings to stay and shroud!
Against the light the foremast
Is bright with frozen mail —
The decks are gray with flying spray
And rough with spattered hail.

There's a fog that numbs the ocean
To smoky deeps where hide
The noisy hosts of hooting ghosts
That warn from overside;
O cursed be all the shadows
Of bank and shoal and bar,
And send us clear the silver spear
That arms an honest star!

THE SATIRIST

I took a snatch of sun-wrack, and a whiff
Of south-wind laden with the drone of surf
That booms on golden shores, where palm-roots
run

In tangled webs to taste the milk-warm wave:
(So keeps the Sea her children-isles of dream,
And calls her exiled dreamers home again.)

Of these I wove a song — and all the years
Fled ghost-like, vanished, dropped me swift to
youth,

And gave me back Hesperides. Ay, Love,
That left me, laughing, æons past, and hid —
(Bare, sun-kissed shoulders glinting through
the maze

Of *rata* twining 'mid the tree-trunks!) —
seemed

To loose for me the dark flood of her hair
And drown me in it. . . . — When I strove to
sing

My song to other men, and let the world
Share but a fraction of my joy and pain,
What said they? “Lo, the song is old and
sad —

Why more of it? 'Twas well sung long ago,
To smoother music.” So I took a bar
Of blood-wrought steel, and spun it into thread
Bright, cold, and sharp as dust of diamonds.
Then

I wove it on a loom of artifice,
Lent it a gargoyle's grin, called it a song,
And turned it loose. *And all the world cried*
 "Hail!
Here sings a bard whose voice will never die!"

IN A CONVENT GARDEN

YOUNG love, strong love, meeting 'mid the
roses!

Dare ye think of loving, where the plaster Mary
poses?

Better Pan should roister

In the shade of hallowed cloister! —

Idle droops the rosary — what paganry dis-
closes!

True love, new love, dancing down the ages —
Mocking at the precepts and the parables of
sages!

Balance they the blisses

Of a hundred stolen kisses

Snatched while Mother Beatrice was nodding
o'er the pages?

Old love, bold love, weary with its madness!
Mock ye, then, at April with its glamour and
its gladness?

Since ye know the sorrows

Of a hundred spent To-morrows,

Dream ye that your day is done, and fading
into sadness?

Sad love, mad love! Leap ye, then, to waking?
Light ye bear the burden of the grieving and
forsaking!

Lips that sip of laughter
Learn the tang of sorrow after —
Learn, and drink in silence, while the gayer
hearts are breaking!

THE DEGENERATE SPEAKS

I SEE you pass like a wayward god in a robe of
wonder,
Prince of the realms of Youth, with the flame
in your eyes —
Shoulders that jostle the hats of the mob, till
it wavers asunder,
Splitting in torrents of hurrying faces, drab
as the skies.

The clouds are low where the clanging streets
of the demon-city
Raise to the heavens the reek of their grooved
ravines,
And you come like a sprite of the sun, with a
present of pity —
Pity that stings like a helot's lash, in our
hell-demesnes!

Ay, saw you me too? — with the leaden stare
and the drooping shoulder —
Furtive, mean, with the brand of the Rat in
my face?
— Weary with years? By the years, it is *you*
are the older —
You, with the youth-hot passionate eyes, and
the dancer's grace!

The chance was mine, and the fault was mine,
and the sorrow and sighing,
But I was weary, too weary to grieve, from
the first;
Ay, and the gateway of Peace and Forgetting,
that comforts the dying,
Careless the Gods left wide — I was mothered
accurst.

O eyes that follow the cycle of life in eternal
revolving!
Pity, my gay Greek god, the slave on the
treadmill of Time!
Mad?, I am mad with the direst of sanities!
This the absolving —
That I should dance in the revel of Youth
like a painted mime.

The trailing folds of the curtain of Birth are in
tatters —
See how the torrents of Time unveil — how
the lives are massed!
What — you would *help* me? O blindness of
life! As if Charity matters —
Matters to me, with my youth — a century
deep in the past!

PSYCHE KARDIOU

THERE is a ghost that arms the hearts of men
Till Death the victor fails, allied with Fear —
Till Sorrow stoops to comfort, and each tear
Glints like a dewdrop touched by morn again;
Some name it Faith, that lights the darksome
fen

Of worldly doubt; some call it Insight clear;
Some Love; some Reason stark in robes austere,
Or crash of battle down a hostile glen.

Yet for the war what arms I bear I owe
To a dim ghost-soul that I may not free,
That feels the stir of wind, the beat of sea,
And neither Faith nor Reason, dares to *know!*
What would I be without my spectre? Lo!
A craven, clutching at Eternity!

A VAGABOND'S PRAYER TO LIFE

LIFE, for the span of a day,
For a morn, for an hour,
Ere I am weary and old
Give me power to pay —
Pay with the red sun-gold
And the dew on the flower,
Debts that I owe to the gods
Of the lonely way.

In that I dared it alone
Through the sun and the shadow,
Deeming the House of the Skies
But the roof of mine own,
Give me at length to surprise
With the lark o'er the meadow
Themes of the songs of the gods
By the winds new-blown.

This — and my father, the Sun,
For a friend, for a neighbor —
Lending the world for the field
Of a gay fight won —
Lo, with the dawning revealed
Lie the goals of my labor!
Roads that are marked by the gods
Ere my strength be done.

Yet, when I wake to the day
That shall dawn on my garden,
In that I journeyed alone
Give me friends, to repay!
Friends with the sins to atone
That shall win me their pardon —
Debtors with me to the gods
Of the lonely way!

THE PENCIL PEDDLER

EARTH and its glory, the rain and the sunlight
on oceans unsounded,
Life and its magic, the pain and the pleasure,
the rapture unbounded,
Love and its scented abysses of torture rose-
hidden —
All except Death have I known, that alone
was forbidden.

Passers that brush me, nor heed me, the cripple
that squats in the gutter,
Would ye could read, 'neath the lip's ready pat-
ter, the curses I mutter!
Once was I also a Man, in the flush of my
passion; —
Hated, loved, even as you — pitied, too, in
my fashion!

Even as you, O my brothers in masking! And
this the finale —
Limping so slowly on leather-shod stumps, may
I win to the Valley?
Fling me a copper — my blessing, that for-
tune should fall so;
Spurn me — and mind not my curses, for
thus was I, also.

THE OLD VOYAGERS

THERE'S a trumpet-call at twilight, when the
world is grey with sorrow —

Monotones of sorrow where the dimming
ocean lies —

And our pallid dead romances are the promise
of a morrow

Far and fading into shadow where the last
flame dies ;

Far and fading — can ye see it — can ye feel it
— can ye hear it —

It is lost beyond the limit of the lost horizon-
rim ;

In *our* day we lived on darkness! Now the
light has come to clear it,

And we brought the light, who loved it —
would to God we'd left it dim!

Would to God we'd left the blankness and the
mystery and luring

Of the empty places whispering of Ophir and
Cathay,

Of the open, shoreless ocean, with its triumphs
of enduring,

And the dawning and the sunset on the lone
sea-way!

Of the magic islands lifting, hiding dim Cibola-
cities,

Dim and hidden, dream-embattled, golden-
streeted, silver-walled —
But we proved them — and we lost them — lend
us mercy, Lord of Pities! —
For it seemed the Earth was endless — could
we help it — we were called.

There's a trumpet-call at twilight, but our
blades are dull and rusted,
And the caravels are rotting at the Quay of
Missing Ships,
And the fever-ridden harbors where we drank
and died and lusted,
Lo, they glimmer into nothings with the chan-
teys on our lips!
We are spectres of adventure, but we haunt ye
till ye need us,
Though the world is planned and plotted by
the torment of our wars;
We are waiting in the Shadow till our kinsmen
hear and heed us —
*Till they stamp the Earth beneath them and
are gay amid the stars!*

ENNUYÉ

O, ONCE I played at passion well,
Till all the world believed;
And hearts were jealous when I loved,
And sorrowed when I grieved.
But deep within me grinned a Self
That would not be deceived.

“O, ’tis a jest,” the Spirit laughed,
“The human trick to steal!
Where got you courage for the play?
I know *you* cannot feel.
Oho! ’Tis such a roaring farce,
I weep it is not real!

“My friend, how won *you* right to sing,
Or passion’s harp to strum?
Yet lips had never sung so true
Had not the heart been dumb;
Your fingers never found the chords —
Aye, what had you become?

“An infant, babbling silly woes! —
So play the mimic through!
Be brave!” But I had lost my mask,
And could not find a new;
And ’twas at best a weary play —
I wept it had been true.

THE EXILE

I HAVE known the joy of the upland, the peaks
and the buttress-hills,
The rock-sown windy barrens, new-ploughed
by the 'shares of God ;
The drone of the harp o' the tempest, and the
small, clear song of the rills,
And the crest flame-tipped in the dawning, at
the touch of an angel's rod —

I have known the wrath of the upland, the tem-
pled courts of the clouds,
The threat of the storm-flung robes of snow
that drop from the mountain's breast,
But my heart is sick for the harvest wind, for
the fields in their tawny shrouds,
For a lamplit pane, and a plainsman's hearth,
and — rest.

O a man can pray in the upland, in the vaulted
church of the sky,
And walk with Jove where the Titans raged,
at the wrath of His face ;
But I, who am bred to the arch of the stars, I
will go to the plains to die,
And tune my heart to the hymn of the storm
on the floors of space.

OUTCAST

Love that was light as a breeze at dawn —

How should we stoop to fearing?

Cowards that pander and slaves that fawn —

Hounds that snuff at the trail we trod —

We, that are safe on the knees of God,

Heed we their ill-hid sneering,

Love that was pure as the dawn?

Do the will-o'-the-wisp and the witch-fire heed

What the dull world thinks of the paths they
lead?

Nay — let us say

That the wings of day

Are ours to wander a world away,

And not that, driven and shamed and blind,

We left the sheltering Pale behind!

Ah, let us live

With the bee on the flower —

Forget and forgive

With the hurrying hour!

Till a love miscalled and a jest misread,

Till a pampered lie and a truth unsaid,

Die with the sting of a burnt-out scorn —

Love that was pure as an April morn!

'Twas a half-meant kiss

And a head on a shoulder —

At the first but this —

Yet, suddenly older,

[50]

We stood guilt-marked in the world-old Court,
Where a pious grey rake held the judge's
chair,

And were tried for a "crime of the baser sort"
That the "good" may envy, but scarcely
dare. . . .

O heart of my heart,
Shall the lying creed
In our world apart
Bid us hide, or heed?

Let us laugh, though our motley be beggars'
tatters;

True love, true love, is there aught else matters?

Since we have won to the knees of God,

Why should the world be jealous?

That there's no return by the road we trod

Need we the world to tell us?

Laugh and be gay! Do the witch-fires heed

What the dull world thinks of the paths they
lead?

We have won unsmirched through the sneers
and scorn

Out into Life from a land forlorn,

Out from the Dark to the blaze of the sun —

Would you wish, at the ending, the deed undone,

Love that is pure as an April morn?

A YOUNG MAN'S PRAYER

LET me not live, O Time, to be old and weary —
Thou, who art God of all Gods, and King of
all Kings —

Let me not walk like a ghost in the sun, and
dreary

Harken with ears long-dead when the wood-
thrush sings —

Let me not wake on a day when the pennoned
morning

Brightens on eyes unheeding, and cheeks un-
flushed ;

Let me not darken the world with my misery,
scorning

Joy of the birds, and whisper of wind dawn-
hushed —

But let me die with my heart still gay with the
tourney,

Facing the Dark with a song on my lips, and
my feet

Light on the threshold that calls to the last long
journey

Over the far blue hills where the highways
meet !

DUST

ACROSS the ridge the barren earth runs down —
Gay, vagrant dust that shifts with every
breeze —

Over the hill-crest weaving mysteries,
Against the sun's face wreathing thee a crown!
Jester of ages, robed in grey and brown,
See how it wraps thee, Love, with fantasies!
Till like a priestess, gold-bathed to the knees,
Thou standest shimmering in thy saffron gown.

Dust that is swift to hide or blind or dim,
Yet that is rose-haze in the sunset-glow!
Sweeping across autumnal fields, to skim
Like wrack o' dreams along each barren row.
Dare we despise it? Look ye, down the sky
Drop with the moon the star-dust nebulae.

THE CABIN-BOYS

IN the days when old New England was the
half of all the nation,
And the Injuns and Virginnys made the bal-
ance of the land,
We were starting life as farmers — and we
worked to beat creation
Tilling barren-gutted valleys, clearing boul-
ders, ploughing sand.
We were humble sons of farmers,
Simple, slaving sons of farmers,
Sons of heavy-handed farmers, who were hon-
est as could be —
But we heard a tale of pirates
(Good old brazen-hearted pirates!)
And we wanted to be pirates, so we ran away
to sea!

Aye, we heard a tale of islands ringed with pearl
on seas of beryl,
Where the dawning leaped to meet you, like
a lover, from the night,
And of golden-streeted cities hid in jungles gay
with peril,
Where the rivers lured to follow with the
word of new delight;
Aye, we heard a tale of cities,
Hundred-gated wonder-cities,

Mystic, lost, Cibola-cities, tales as true as
true could be —

All the yarns of bright adventure,
(Ever-new-and-old Adventure!)
And the whisper of its wonder drew us seek-
ing out to sea.

So we tramped away to Marblehead, to Salem
and to Glo'ster —

(O, just to sniff the tar and see the rocking
riding-lights!)

But Fortuna ran before us till we followed,
found, and lost her

Like a vision in the doldrums of forbidden
island-heights!

Aye, we dropped away to seaward —

Wing-and-wing we swept to seaward —

And the mate, *he* was a pirate, just as plain
as plain could be;

But we never found an ingot —

Not a single, blessed ingot! —

Though they glittered through our fancy like
the sunrise on the sea.

Now the wind is fair from south'ard, and the
schooners in the offing

Are breaking out their tops'ls for the venture
down the bay,

And the brass-bejewelled liners in their elegance
are scoffing

At our lurid old sea-visions of the Indies and
Cathay.

“ *They are ghosts of dead romances,*”

Hoot the sirens — “ *dead romances —*
Ghosts of obsolete romances, that are doubt-
ful as can be —

Just the dreams of drunken sailors —

Paunchy, roaring, grog-shop sailors! —
Yet their painted slut Adventure, did she lure
ye out to sea? ”

THE MISANTHROPE

My feet are set on lonely roads that shun the
weary towns,
I fence my rugged pastures on the freeland of
the downs;
The wind that treads the barren sweep of des-
erts and of seas
Is my servant at the sowing, and my confidant
at ease.
Comes a whisper in the gloaming — comes a
shouting at the morn —
“ Brother, sleep,” or “ Brother, waken ! ” — lest
his brother be forlorn ;
And I hear him through the Babel of the human
monkey-clan —
“ O the Gods were surely weary when they
stooped to make a Man ! ”

And yet I may not laugh away the sordidness
and sham,
Or join the clever cynics with a poisoned epi-
gram ;
“ The howling of the tempest drowns the yap-
ping of the mob — ”
If ye drop a jewelled dagger, does the tinkle
drown a sob ?
O ye “ masters of creation,” with your “ towers
to the stars ” —

See ye not the grinning terror 'neath the tinsel
of your wars?

— But the whisper! “ *Brother — brother!*
Ape you, too, the monkey-clan?

Pity — for the Gods were weary when they
stooped to make a Man! ”

THE DEPARTURE

(Typhoon Weather)

IN the west is a funeral-flame,
In the east is a festal flare,
Where the skies rejoice at the rise of the moon
And grieve at the sun's despair —
Titans in pride and shame,
Red targe to blood-red targe —
The sea lies thrall'd by a devil's rune
Silent from marge to marge.

A ship's black bulk between,
And the smoke-flag drifting low —
For the air droops dead as a love-sigh breathed
A thousand years ago.
The bare masts lifting lean
Nod to a slate-drab sky,
And the dull stars peer like eyes mist-wreathed
Watching an old love die.

Out to the gloom of the sea!
The wash of the wake breaks white,
And the shore-boats lift on a ribbon of fire
That slashes the robe of night.
Ah, Heart, may we yet win free,
Till the hearse-plume palm-fringe fades,
And drown our dream of a lost desire
In the wind-whipped blue of the Trades?

*Heart, may we yet win free
From the spell of the sunlit sea,
From the lure of the long delights
Of our dear dead island-nights,
From the sea-fire's sorcery-flare,
And the bold limbs flashing bare,
From the full breast's sobbing heave,
And the dark hair's tangled weave —
From the magic and mystery
Of our island-dream of the sea —
Heart, may we yet win free?*

PROPEMPTIKON

Out by the rim of the sea, on the grey sand-
reaches,
The wind plays a desolate dirge on the harp of
the beaches ;
The crests of the wind-bitten dunes are stream-
ing to leeward,
Aping the smoulder of spindrift whirling from
seaward ;
The blades of the sere beach-grass are alive with
the patter
Of myriad air-driven feet of the sands as they
scatter,
And far on the steely horizon a topsail is gleam-
ing,
Fading to southward to skylands of drifting
and dreaming.

Topsails that flicker and falter, then, suddenly
bolder,
Droop in the sea, and are hid by the loom of her
shoulder,
Leaving me sad 'mid the ashes and embers of
passion
That mock with their drabness the Dawn-Wiz-
ard leaping to fashion
Flame-towered, pennanted glories — whose fin-
gers bedizen

With masquerade-tatters of splendour the vir-
gin horizon,
Till lo — comes the King of the Masque — and
with Puritan scorning
Homeward I go like a ghost in the blaze of the
morning.

DOSTA!

(Gypsy Song)

WITH the sun in the sky
And the wind in the grasses,
The flash of an eye
And the laughter of lasses,
With dawn on the road
And a light shoulder-load —
Though the going be smooth or the go-
ing be rough,
Dosta! It is enough!

With a star and a moon
And a luck with the weather,
The lilt of a tune
And the dew on the heather,
With wine and a friend
At the gay journey's end —
Though the going be smooth or the go-
ing be rough,
Dosta! It is enough!

TO A HALF-BRED MARE THAT DIED

FEET in the dark that are more than human,
Following light on the night-hid trail —
Grace that passeth the grace of woman,
Ears alert for the master's hail —
Have you forgotten me, then, in the Shadow,
O dear bay mare with the mane flung free?
Or say, does a neigh from the pasture-meadow
Cry, "*Mount, and over the hills with me*"?

There's a loss that is dire as the loss of brother
That the world has ordered may scarce be
wept,
For grief for a horse is a grief to smother,
To slay with a jest, if your face be kept!
O pass untroubled that empty bridle
That hangs like a corpse on the stable wall —
Though the road be dull and the heart beat idle,
'Twas a horse — let that be the end of it
all. . . .

There's a trail that follows the sun-rich valleys,
Looping the hills to a haunted sea —
There's a beat of a hoof where the woodland
alleys
Stretch to an Arcady far and free;
And the lilting of long-dead song and banter
Drifts to my ears with an old surprise —
O mare, have you sorrow for life, who canter,
A shade, on the pastures of Paradise?

Dawns that we greeted on cloud-hung highlands,
 (Dizzy the ways, but your feet were sure)
Hills that lifted like fog-wrapped islands,
 Snaring the heart with their distant lure —
May I forget them? Or find them, lonely,
 All for the brush of a wind-whipped mane?
Peace! For a mare is a mare, that only —
 Dead, can ye saddle or sit her again?

Only a horse . . . but my heart's convictions
 Ever have whispered of kindly Fates,
And I hear, in the face of the priest's predic-
 tions,
 The ghost-mare stamp at the darksome Gates.
A rattle of hooves, and as lane and byway
 Tempted us once, let the trackless stars!
Till the Tollman Peter, who guards the high-
 way,
 Hark to a whinny, and — loosen the bars!

Feet in the dark that are more than human,
 Following light on the night-hid trail —
Grace that passeth the grace of woman,
 Ears alert for the master's hail —
Is it a vision, the shape in the meadow,
 O dear bay mare with the mane flung free —
Or say, does a ghost from the After-Shadow
 Cry, "*Mount, and over the Dark with me*"?

THE PENALTIES

A Fool once danced with Fate on Sorrow's bier,
And found Remorse beside him, led by Fear:
The jester, pallid, cried "Excuse — excuse —
I was a Fool, because I might not choose!
Yet I repent. Forgive me! See, I pray —
Lo, I have sinned, but Ye have shown the Way."

*Still, though he clasped their knees, and prayed
to Sorrow,
Remorse gave Yesterday, and Fear To-morrow.*

A brother Fool dragged Sorrow from his
hearse —
Cast out the grim corpse like an emptied
purse —
"Lo, I have drawn my wage, and spent it well,"
He cried — "Now let me weep, and win my Hell.
For I would grieve." He laughed, and stooped
to hear
What words the blind Remorse should speak for
Fear:

*Remorse turned groping; dumb Fear followed
after,
Leaving the Fool alone with scourgeman Laugh-
ter.*

THE TRUE MAGIC

THE beauty that men seek is half a dream —
Where'er we wander, yet it lies afar;
It touches with its wand a setting star,
It stirs the ripple of an ebbing stream.
And though we run beyond the dawning-gleam,
Or kneel to worship at an altar bright,
We may not know the soul of its delight,
Or more than marvel at its palest beam.

And yet in visions men have lived to see —
Aye, dared the stunning glories of its face —
And from their wonder wrung the skill to
trace
In flaming glyphs a dream of majesty —
To strike a stone to rapture, or to grace
A sorrow with a robe of melody.

THE CHILDREN'S FLEETS

BENEATH a kindly sun
There winks a mighty sea ;
Across the waters run
Our fleets of fantasy —
The frigates grim and tall,
The schooners low and black —
From trireme out of Gaul
To skiff of Sarawak.

The lily-pads that drift
Beneath the summer breeze,
Are magic isles that lift
Their peaks on tropic seas.
The scum that roofs the pond
With flaunt of filmy seed
Is spelled by fairy wand
To thick Sargasso weed.

Ye say the lofty ships,
Our barks and pirate-brigs,
Are naught but whittled chips
And stripped and riven twigs?
From reefed sea-battered isle
To harbor-city spires,
The fancies that beguile
Our hungry dream-desires?

Ye dare not tell us so!

We may not halt to hear,
While crowd the keels below

Our thronged and bannered pier.

Ah, pitiful! — to wake

With shadow-ridden eyes —

Nor know the dawns that break

On shores of Paradise!

THE SMOKE-FLAG

(Engine Choral)

DISTANT, dim, on the earth's far rim where the
breezes shout to the fulmar free,
Black I creep o'er the roadless deep on my long
adventure from quay to quay —
Flaunt my cloak of the bannered smoke to the
windy vaults of an empty sea.

South or North ye may fling me forth, O Man,
my lord, who is still my slave —
Slave who feeds me, and lord who leads me, and
god that laughs to a nameless grave —
East or West as your heart's unrest shall
scourge ye craven or lure ye brave.

Flag o' dreams — when the red sun gleams and
the foremast black like a furnace-bar
Cuts its face as the swift keels race to the sun-
set-land of the evening star;
Flag o' Fate — when the blind sea's hate shall
have haled ye down from a hopeless war!

SONNET *

TO TIMOTHY DWIGHT

(President of Yale University 1886-1899)

THERE is a splendor in the wheeling years
That lights the soul with myriad sanctities —
There is a magic in old memories,
And a dear joy in half-forgotten tears ;
So, when the long light trails adown the skies
And lends new glories to the garden's flowers,
Come with the years the golden-footed hours,
And the fresh insight of unclouded eyes.

YOUTH, I would sing ye sermons on your pride!
His is the Youth-in-Age that lives forever ;
An holier strength than yours, that wavers
never,
That has known Life, yet stoops not to deride.
Hark to the lesson, novice! Learn the
truth —
Age ye as he, and win to deeper youth.

* Reprinted from the 1914 Class Book.

THE PHILANDERER

THE moon was a gypsy's penny
 Meshed in the hair of Night,
The road was a scarf of silver
 And the river a robe of light —
And was it the dream while waiting,
 Or was it She when she came,
That turned the thought to a rapture
 And the blood to a pulsing flame?

'Twas She, ye say — but ye weary,
 Be the maiden never so fair!
'Tis but in the dream ye're constant,
 And ye may not clasp her there.
So haste ye not the fulfilling,
 Lest the gold of the dream be dross —
Lest heads be bowed with the sorrow
 And hearts be dead with the loss.

And shall ye turn from the meeting
 In the flare of the white moon-flood,
And shall ye flee from the kisses
 Of the soft lips red as blood?
Ah, shame! Do ye fear for the morrow?
 Love, love, while the dream be new —
On the chance that ye win to a trysting
 When ye find that your dream is true!

RODRIPEN

THE QUEST

From the Romany

I SOUGHT my love 'mid the haze of the highway
dust,

Where the tilted van crept slow in the noon-
day sun —

For a ringlet stirred at the touch of the zeph-
yr's gust,

And I dreamed that my heart was won.

I sought my love where the hillside broke to the
bay,

(O long sea-road to the land of my heart's
desire!)

For her eyes were bright with the morn, and her
cheeks were gay,

And the dawn was her altar-fire.

O the roads are marked with the print of her
dancing feet,

And I find her smile on the lips of a hundred
maids,

But she hides afar where the stars and the
mountains meet

And laughs at the slow decades —

Till the world is sown with the ash of my scat-
tered camps
And my heart is chill with the breath of the
sunset blast —
Yet still in the Dark is the flare of the fairy
lamps
That shall call me to Love at last.

TO A POET WHO DIED YOUNG

THOUGH thy life seem as the day,
And thy death the gloaming-grey,
Though thy spirit loose its hold
With the fading sunset-gold,
Ere thy song be half begun
Or thy fairy cities won
Or thy web of vision spun —
Never weep.

Where thou sowest, thou wilt reap,
In the Land beyond the Sleep.
Thou wilt find a fresher tongue
For thy lyrics yet unsung,
And thy hand a wiser pen,
Till thy music sweep again
Flaming through the lives of men!
Never sigh;
Thinkest Those behind the sky
Made a Poet but to die?

LYRICS FROM THE SCHERIAN

THE OUTLANDER'S SONG

YE who dwell in Fairyland,
 Half a world away,
 Know ye sting of night's tears
 Drying with the day?
 Though the draught of Pleasure
 Be ever yours to drain,
 Children of the Dawn-glow,
 Learn the bliss of Pain!

Ye who dwell in Fairyland,
 Know ye naught but joys?
 Press ye from your vine's wealth
 Wine that never cloy?
 Win, O win to Sorrow
 With the fading leaf —
 Children of the wise Gods,
 Pray the gift of Grief!

Ye who dwell in Fairyland.
 Dancing in the sun,
 Lift ye now my rue-cup
 When the wine is done!
 Idle falls the laughter,
 Closer clings the hand —
Children of the April,
O weep and understand!

II

THE SONG OF THE HARBOR-MAIDENS

LILT the music ne'er so featly
From the throbbing lyre,
Drop the veiling lid discreetly
On the glances' fire!
Heed the grey wife and her warning,
Daughters of the jewelled morning,
Though the love-word linger sweetly
On the lips of young desire!

Lo, the gaunt sea-battered galleys
Fresh from Scylla's den!
Hark ye, down the woodland alleys
Rings the mirth of men!
Till the parted leaves discover
Youth and maiden, maid and lover,
And the fading color rallies,
Dims and rallies, pales again!

Tresses black as plume of raven,
Lips as red as flame,
Heed ye how ye seek the haven,
Lest ye win to shame!
Ah, but glimpsed ye 'neath the arbor
Painted headsails in the harbor?
Age is but a sorry craven,
And is laughing Love to blame?

III

SERENADE

Love, I have furrowed far my shifting trails
By witches' isles that swim in haunted seas,
And glimpsed the silver of thy galley's sails
Rounding the capes of drowsy Cyclades —

Followed and found thee, mirage-born of dream,
Wrought of the flame of dawn and wine of
dew —
Waking the world to wonder with thy gleam,
Soothing with petal-hands to dream anew.

Hail the Releaser! Lo, enchanted shores
Rise at the tilting of His flagon-rims,
Till I am mazed as foam-thresh from my oars,
Drunk with the marble lyric of thy limbs!

IV

ECHO SONG

MAIDEN with the sunny eyes,
And the south-wind in thy tresses,
Though the glades of Paradise
With their haunted wildernesses
Lure to follow,
Never heed!
Shun the lilting syrinx-reed!
Only sorrow
Cometh after
All its flood of joyous laughter,
And though dear the call may be,
Maiden, yet be free!

Little Mistress Never-Care,
Weaving in thy fairy dances,
Hast thou yet the will to dare
All our ages-old romances?
But the calling —
Must thou go
Where the faun-note flutters low?
Wait the falling
Echo after —
“ *Love is more than joy and laughter,
And though dear the call may be,
Maiden, yet be free!* ”

ENVOY

For gift of ruddy sunset-light on sea and barren
strand,
For rapture of the summer dawn, and heart to
understand,
For freedom of the gracious Earth, for life and
its reward —
To whomsoever Thou mayst be, my gratitude, O
Lord!

And if there be a Journey's-end more joyous than
the way,
And if there be an Afterglow more splendid than
the day,
A canvas of Eternity when human colors dim —
Whatever Artist-God there be, my gratitude to
Him!

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